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ABSTRACT

Since 1986-87 there has been, at the Malmo School of Education (Sweden), a special internationalization group with representatives of all the School's boards of studies and the Department of Educational and Psychological Research. This group makes recommendations to the School on grants for different internationalization projects, keeps in touch with current projects, circulates experiences of internationalization activities within the different sections of basic training, and initiates new projects. Last year the internationalization group took the initiative in working out a description of the current internationalization activities at the School of Education and their future direction. This description was accepted by the Board of the School of Education on September 17, 1991, and is reprinted here. (Author)

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EDUCATION IN A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

Internationalization at the Malmö School of Education

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EDUCATION IN A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

Internationalization at the Malmö School of Education

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Indexed: Education, global perspective, internationalization, peace, teacher training.

A SHORT HISTORY

The primary and secondary school

It has been a constant aim ever since the 40s to give school teaching an international perspective in connection with the remodelling and development of school activities. School curricula and other essential instructions clearly show this aim and direction.

The concrete meaning of an international or global perspective in school work has, however, been the subject of continuous interpretations. During the period immediately after the war years, it was the task of the school to create an attitude towards peace and to contribute to the production of opportunities for a lasting peace.

During the 60s, most of the work was devoted to aid to developing countries.

During the 70s, debates on sex roles and equality between men and women became important both in Sweden and internationally. Equality and international understanding were connected in the internationalizing work.

During the 80s the international perspective has contained several overall questions. On the human and cultural level, questions concerning immigrants, refugees and intercultural understanding in a multi-cultural society have become part of the work of the school. Global environmental and resource problems and threats of the destruction of na-

ture and all living beings together with an impending risk of a nuclear war have created feelings of insecurity. This has resulted in an environmental movement and a peace movement both of which are of international scope and have managed to involve more and more people. In schools, education concerning environment and peace has gained ground considerably.

The global questions of a fair distribution of resources in the world and of the relations between rich and poor countries have, however, been put into the shade during the 80s, even though it is sometimes stated that the increasing gap between the rich and the poor is in itself a threat against world peace.

The last years of the 1980s have led to such great and unexpected changes in Europe's political map that, at present, this attracts the attention of practically the whole of the Western World.

The university

Internationalization aims are also of concern in higher education. At the beginning of the 1970s, the then Board of Universities set up an internationalization commission. The leading ideas of this inquiry have served as a guideline for internationalization work within the university.

The internationalization commission expressed the

opinion that internationalization has two aims:

> *the solidarity aim* (working for a more secure and just world for all) and
>
> *the industry and commerce aim* (the market economy principle of maximum profit with demands on international competitiveness).

During the 1980s the conflict between these aims has become more and more evident.

Repeated evaluations of the direction of the internationalization work, both on a central and a local level, have also shown that it is the West European or Anglo-Saxon perspective that is completely predominant. In university connections, the direction of internationalization is often decided through agreements between those forces within the university that are in favour of one or the other opinion in this conflict of aims. This description must not however be understood to be a matter of choosing between either one or the other direction. It is rather a question of a field of tension where the debate has to be kept alive all the time.

Decisions on direction are also often influenced by instructions and earmarked grants from central authorities, e.g. departments and the Board of Universities and Colleges.

At present almost all attention is being concentrated on the development of an exchange programme with the European Community. Since these programmes give priority to that, it is difficult to get resources for other internationalization activities. It is important to take part in the EG exchange programme which in the long run, will lead to development of educational syllabuses. However, cooperation with the EG must not imply geographical or cultural limitation of this internationalization work. It is at least equally important that cooperation should be broadened to comprise Eastern and Central Europe as well as The Third World, which might provide possibilities for a qualitative renewal of our views of culture and knowledge and also lead to awareness of global responsibilities.

THE CONTENTS OF INTERNATIONALIZATION

The content of the internationalization work in schools and universities can be described using the following main categories:

Man's relationship with nature

Study of ecological balance and economizing of resources while, on the other hand, recognizing the risks of short-

term overexploitation of natural resources leading to rapid deterioration of living conditions;

Distribution of the earth's resources

Study of fair/equal sharing out of material assets and decreasing the gap between the rich and the poor, as opposed to the risk of an unfair distribution of resources leading to conflicts, disturbances and war;

Relations between countries

Study of cooperation and mutual exchange of both a material and cultural nature, instead of pointing out the risk of conflicts and war threatening to devastate all forms of life;

Cultural and human relations

Study of the possibilities for human and intercultural meetings that create confidence, mutual understanding and a richer human and cultural life, but also the risk of distrust, prejudice, discrimination and conflict.

As will be seen from these polarized descriptions, there are both possibilities and risks included in all aspects of content. The challenge for schools, universities and society is to try to create favourable conditions for the realization of these possibilities and limitation of the risks.

GENERAL CONDITIONS OF THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

At our school of education, questions of internationalization have attracted a lot of attention for a number of years. The starting point has not only been the central guidelines for the internationalization of the university's own activities, but also the guidelines for the internationalization work of schools and child care. The question is that of preparing for the future teachers' activities after they have completed their education. The work of the school of education is also often carried out in cooperation with schools and child-care services in the municipalities.

As one of three schools of education in the country, the Malmö School of Education has, since 1977, been responsible for the training of home language teachers. This training has had transfer effects and has influenced other parts of the school of education's activities by, among other things, constantly bringing into focus questions of contact between cultural patterns.

Courses in Swedish as a second language have been offered since the beginning of the 1970s and gradually they have been integrated into a variant of the new junior and secondary school teacher programme. This programme, as well as bilingual preschool teacher education, has also con-

tributed to give activities at the Malmö School of Education an international and intercultural tradition and profile.

Within the department of educational and psychological research, different research and development projects have dealt with questions concerning, among other things, citizen of the world responsibilities, peace and conflict problems, readiness for the future and global survival problems. Since the middle of the 1960s, extensive research regarding these questions has been carried out and considerable knowledge has been acquired.

A project called "Children in the Third World" is aimed at bringing about common contributions in order to improve developmental conditions for children in poor countries. This project makes it possible to create co-operation between different training programmes at the school of education, as well as between these programmes and institutions in the Third World – at present in India and Kenya. The Student Union at the school of education takes an active part in this project. Teachers and students in this way get opportunities to obtain vocational training and to take part in practical solidarity work. It is easy to understand how, for example, students training to become vocational teachers within a project of this kind may adopt a new approach to their own profession and at the same time get an opportunity to offer concrete contributions to the development of welfare in countries of the Third World.

Other questions that have been treated in research and development work are immigrant and refugee problems and intercultural comparisons.

A large number of those employed at the school of education have had assignments within SIDA (the Swedish International Development Authority) or within international organizations and have thereby been able to be resources of great use to teacher training. Several of the teachers who work within the programmes for home language teachers and bilingual preschool teachers have also taken part in training in the form of study tours to other countries and cultures. These study tours have gone especially to the countries of origin of the home language teachers and the preschool teachers.

Study tours to Poland, England, Denmark and Israel and other countries have for a long time been recurrent features in the education of student teachers.

There has been an exchange of teachers and researchers especially with Poland, Yugoslavia and Hungary.

Contacts have also been established with the Baltic States. Exchange of teachers has taken place both with Tallin and Tartu in Estonia and deeper cooperation has been established with Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

Different working teams have arranged series of seminars and other further education activities dealing with international questions, among other things a rather long series of seminars on education and social development in

the Third World.

Since the school year 1986/87, a reference group for the entire school of education has been working on co-ordination of internationalization activities. This group also plays an active part in the initiation implementation and follow-up of internationalization activities. In April 1990 the group organized an internationalization conference dealing with the theme of "Education in a global perspective".

Here, only those internationalization activities that affect several education programmes have been mentioned. Within each programme/department there are further examples of international perspectives in basic and continuation courses.

As part of Lund University, the school of education is represented in the university's joint reference group for the internationalization of basic education.

INTERNATIONALIZATION WORK IN THE 1990s

The activities of the school of education are diverse: basic education and further education of different categories of teachers, research and development work, production of textbooks and teaching aids etc. In all activities, interna-

tionalization has a prominent position. As has been mentioned earlier, there are already a large number of internationalization features, but the activities need further consolidation and development.

It is worth pointing out that, in principle, teacher training and further education of teachers affect all teachers in the general educational system and the personnel within child care services and, for that reason, many children and younger people, as well as indirectly a great number of parents.

The corner-stones of an internationalization policy are even now pretty obvious. It is self-evident that our activities are directed towards the education system and child care. Compulsory primary and secondary schools as well as adult education, are dealt with. Joint projects with other countries, industrialized countries as well as underdeveloped countries, are desirable. Such projects are, however, costly.

The special internationalization resources that have, up to now, been available, have been a significant support in our work. As a matter of fact, though, our research and development projects have not always had the impact in our regular education that might be desired. In many cases, teachers at the school of education lack knowledge concerning these questions.

There is also shortage of relevant teaching aids and

concrete planning schemes that show how the substance of knowledge should be integrated, in a suitable way, into different areas of education.

The central feature of the internationalization work in teacher training consists of intercultural education or an intercultural approach. After completing their education, the student teachers should be able to adopt a global approach to their own situation and to culture. To make it possible for internationalization and intercultural education to be well grounded, development and research activities are essential, especially with regard to international educational items of different kinds, cultural knowledge, culture characterized behaviour, the varied conditions of different cultures (e.g. history, economy, religious and ethnic structure), environmental issues, peace and conflict matters as well as global solidarity. In teacher training these issues are essential parts in the development of teacher competence.

MAIN FIELDS OF ACTIVITIES

The school of education's different activities – in the shape of education, research and development work – ought to be coordinated in such a way that basic training is given an international/global perspective. Internationalization work

at the school of education should concentrate on the following content and methodological issues.

1 Global survival questions

Teacher training should give increased knowledge of the impact of environmental issues from a local, national, regional and global angle.

Within its sphere, teacher training ought to support current ambitions to reduce the military tension of the world and to create conditions of a lasting peace.

Teacher training should also contribute towards deeper understanding of the reasons for the increasing gap between the rich and the poor areas of the world, between industrialized and underdeveloped countries, in that way to increase the will and the power to reduce these gaps and thereby limit the risks of a growing conflict between North and South. Teacher training ought to maintain the principle of everybody's right to education and during lessons to discuss the consequences of that principle.

2 Multicultural Sweden

Teacher training should provide knowledge of the role played by schools and child care services in multicultural Sweden and furthermore develop methods that pay attention to a new ethnic and cultural situation in school classes and groups of children.

Teacher training should deal with issues of the following kind: What is meant by the multicultural Sweden that we assume exists and which we want to create in the future? What is meant by the intercultural approach in our education that the Swedish Parliament has recommended? How does this outlook manifest itself in our work in schools, child care services and other areas of society?

A large proportion of the pupils in the nine-year compulsory school, the upper secondary school and adult education now have an immigrant background. What does this mean to cultural understanding and practical-pedagogical work in schools?

3 *International exchange of experience for students and teachers*

With the aim of contributing to a global perspective, improved language proficiency and a widened professional skill, teacher training should provide opportunities for students and teachers to establish interchange with different countries and worlds of culture. In addition to cooperation and interchange with the Scandinavian countries, e.g. within the NORDPLUS programme, interchange programmes should be developed in cooperation with similar institutions in Western Europe aiming at exchange of experiences, e.g. through the so-called ERASMUS programme within the EC countries. This is important and in line with Sweden's application for membership of the EC.

At the same time, it is essential to ensure that the discussion about EC cooperation does not make us forget that we are part of an even larger world, all the world, which it is the duty of teachers and child care personnel to help the growing generation understand and feel responsibility for. Therefore it is important that contact should also be maintained with countries in Eastern Europe and the Third World.

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